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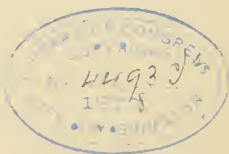
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Free
TO MEMBERS OF LEBANON M. E. CHURCH.

Feb. 4th, 1878.

J. N. IRVIN, PASTOR.

“He that winneth souls is wise.”—Proverbs xi, 30.



Lebanon, O.

1878

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I HEREWITH—for the reason that I feel I ought—lay before you in printed, permanent form, an account of things recently said and done among us. These utterances are visional and radiant, beaming out somewhat of truth and duty for the hour, hence are practical rather than technical, and in the present shape are designed as a religious campaign document.

VOWS RENEWED.

ON Tuesday evening, January 29th, 1878, in our Lecture Room, after opening services, I said, in substance as follows:—I have for a good part of the last three nights past been tossing on my bed out of that restlessness which is born of the Holy Ghost. It is vain to exhort one to lay aside burdens of this character. They who speak so are as incapable of judging in things spiritual as was Eli, who, when Hannah was religiously in earnest, declared her to be drunk. If such persons had been with our Lord in the hour of his agony in the garden they would have exhorted Him to be reconciled to God. I am about to lay aside some burdens and assume some new responsibilities. I do this for your sake. When some complained of Mr. Wesley assuming too much responsibility, he said it was a burden which he bore not for his own, but for their sakes, that if they would pick him out any one or five men on whom he could shift the responsibility he would be glad to do so.

Brethren and sisters of our Church then present—nearly a hundred—renewed their vows by the following questions, answering without a dissenting voice as below indicated :

Have you given yourself to the Lord Jesus? *Ans.* I have.

Do you know yourself to be a child of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? *Ans.* I do.

Are you willing to work for our Lord Jesus Christ? *Ans.* I am.

Before the answers were given the questions were explained in substance as follows :

The first question thus:—By giving yourself to the Lord Jesus is meant, that you have seen your sin ; sorrowed over and loathed it ; desired to turn from it and have resolved so to do ; that you have fled to the Lord Jesus and have surrendered yourself to Him as to the only Savior. All probationers in the Church, as well as full members, can, it seems to me, answer this in the affirmative, for when they applied for probation, they by that act expressed “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.”

“Do you know yourself to be a child of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?” was explained thus:—The question of justification by faith was the

battle-ground controversy of the Reformation under Luther and his coadjutors in the opening of the sixteenth century. About two centuries after, over one hundred years ago, John Wesley became the head and front of the revival of that glorious doctrine—the light of which had ere then seriously waned—setting it in a light still clearer than Luther shed upon it—and emphasized vigorously the truth that a man may know himself to be a child of God. We know that we are children of God by the three-fold witness of the Holy Ghost: 1. By the promise of the Word in which the mind of the Spirit is revealed. There we are assured that God will do certain things for us on certain conditions. Doing our part we are warranted in taking for granted that God does his. We take God at his word and know ourselves to be children of God by promise through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We are warranted in this in the absence of the witness of fruits or in the absence of the direct witness of the Holy Ghost. 2. The witness of the promise is followed always, sooner or later, with the witness of fruits. By these we mean, “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” which are declared to be the fruits of the Spirit. Old things pass away and all things spiritual become new, and by this second witness we know ourselves to be children of God. 3. Again, we know it by the direct witness of the Holy Ghost. Two kings in the Old Testament looked each other in the face—“for war.” Sometimes we know the direct glance of God upon us to be one of disfavor, and then it is like the Look through the pillar of Cloud and Fire upon the Egyptians, at which their chariot wheels came off and they drave them heavily. At other times we know the witness of a Personal Glance to be no longer for war but for peace, and in it we receive the knowledge of our adoption as sons. These three elements—or parts—of the one witness do not always come in the order named, but if the believer—whether probationer or full member—be possessed of any one of them he is entitled to call himself a child of God, and so may answer our second question in the affirmative.

Under “Are you willing to work for our Lord Jesus Christ?” was said this:—One is your Master—Jesus Christ. John Wesley objected to saying Dear Jesus, preferring to say Lord Jesus. He showed himself to have the same feeling of reverence in the presence of his Lord that Moses had at the Burning Bush, and was ready to take his shoes from off his feet in token that he was on holy ground. Furthermore, by expressing reverence for his Master instead of mere human affection he guarded against—in his own mind and in the minds of others—“the possible classification of Jesus with men.” What in the face of all the light possible your Lord gives you to see you

ought to do that is your duty to do. The work spoken of is not secular work, but Gospel work. It is Gospel work in the Church of your choice. It is Gospel work in the Church of your choice as God gives you the ability, as the Church affords you opportunity, as your Lord shows you you ought to do it. Are you willing to do this? And here again you are called to act as free moral agents, in glad and willing service, as you did when on your own application you were admitted to and became members and probationers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Our vows renewed, attention was called to other things.

In matter of physical comfort, if you are too cold draw near the stove, if too warm withdraw from it, not hesitating at any time to change places—choosing if possible the time when you are least likely to interrupt others or draw their attention to you. In matters of heat and ventilation the sexton is in charge and responsible to the Board of Trustees. If you have suggestions to make do not approach the sexton directly, but communicate with the committee who have the matter in charge for the Trustees and who will gladly hear any thing you have to say, and if possible oblige you in the matter.

We do not expect to be troubled with disorderly conduct in the House of God, or during the hours of worship. The sexton has this matter in charge, is at liberty to call brethren to assist him, and if need be is authorized to invoke the power of the civil law to protect us in this matter.

The order of worship and the very weighty responsibility of giving directions to the services rests upon me, as your pastor. I am glad to hear suggestions from the highest or the most lowly of my brethren in these matters. Remember, however, that it is not possible for any one of us to be exactly suited in these things. The position of a pastor when suggestions are all in is like that of a sexton who is requested by one party to keep up a hot fire, and by another party to let the fire burn low or go out; or like that of an officer of government at Washington who in matter of appointments can not please all. Napoleon said, "I get all the advice I can and do as I please." I shall get all the light I can in these matters and then try to do what I feel I ought to do. I think I so well understand your mind, spirit and needs that I dare to hope to be able to give very general if not universal satisfaction in this regard.

The aim of these special meetings is to reach those who have not given themselves to the Lord Jesus, or who having done this do not know themselves to be children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus. We have no time for specialties or side issues. Like true fishers of men we are quietly

letting down the Gospel net, not to get a name and make a splash, but to win souls. The Church have declared that they will release pastor and his helpers from the charge of looking after them for the time, and will themselves assist in this work. Our message to the unconverted is, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." You will greatly aid the work if you let this impression go abroad. Meantime little heed can be given, and little attention paid, to any of the children of Israel who are disposed to wander in the wilderness through unbelief.

In the matter of the altar service we have no superstitious notions. We would no sooner teach that there is virtue in the altar than we would that there is virtue in the Pope's toe. Other Churches have their custom, this is ours. We do not shut ourselves up to this alone: we shall use other methods, make personal appeal, home visitation, invite serious persons to and converse with them in the church office. But we are not going to throw away a custom as natural and beneficial as that of the altar service. What is an altar service? Why simply this: The Brethren and Sisters are about the altar to sing and pray. The Church has been opened and the service is held for those who have not given themselves to the Lord Jesus. One who has given himself to Christ has been out after one who has not, and brought him to the Sanctuary and when all is ready, they come together to the altar. One who knows Christ has been out after one who knows him not, and when all is ready, they come and bow together. In the church-house if they see a friend and feel they have the love of that friend's soul at heart they go in the spirit of Jesus, and if said friend consents they come together. Shall I go during public service to speak with my unconverted friend? Much depends on the disposition of that friend, and more on that friend's confidence in you as a Christian man or woman. In general it is safe for us to go out in the congregation and do missionary work of that kind, if we feel we ought, and if we can go in the name and spirit of our Master. What shall be the position of the penitent at the altar? That which he or she prefers—standing or sitting or kneeling. There is no special virtue in posture. The penitent ought at least to kneel when the Church kneels, as that is our attitude in prayer—as indeed ought every member of our Church, unless theirs be specially exceptional cases as for example lameness, infirmity through old age, or such like. Who may converse with penitents? Special friends, persons whom they request to converse with them, or such as are requested to converse with them by those having the meeting in charge. Perhaps they will not come to the altar? Very well, we have done our part.

Can they be converted away from the altar? They may be. Many have been. A man may come into the knowledge of himself as a child of God anywhere, provided he give himself to Christ, and through faith in the Lord Jesus, gets hold of any one or all of the three witnesses to that fact. Ordinarily if one be in earnest for himself or others he gets on his knees. Elijah kneeled on Carmel. Peter, Paul, and Jesus, all kneeled in times of great religious interest; and of the Master it is said that in the Garden, in his agony, he fell on his face.

Let us so understand ourselves that the language of the altar shall speak reasonably, earnestly, loudly and encouragingly to those out of Christ.

PAUL NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL SHAMES ALL MEN OF TO-DAY WHO ARE.

SERMON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 3RD, 1878.

TEXT. "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."—*Romans* I. 16.

PAUL was not disappointed in the Gospel of Christ. He put it to the test. He hinged all interests of salvation on it—his own, his nation's, and the world's—and he was not disappointed in it. Scores of modern smaller men, some hundreds of whom would be required to make one Paul, are in their experiences, practices, and courage, as diverse from him as possible—the worse for them. I am about to suggest that the Gospel has not that conspicuous prominence which it deserves and which Almighty God demands for it. I am about to invite all men, failing to put the Gospel to the test and ashamed of it, to put themselves to the test and of themselves to be ashamed.

The Gospel has not that conspicuous prominence which it deserves:—
When any thing is substituted in its place; when instead of Gospel we have that which is not the Gospel, or that which is contrary or in opposition to the Gospel. It alone is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

When Jesus Christ is preached constructively instead of radiantly. Jesus Christ is the universal Burning Bush, the Moral Sun, the True Light of the world, and we lighten ourselves and others most inconspicuously when instead of turning our faces and causing others to turn theirs full upon him, we turn our backs and begin with a beam of light at the end remote from Him, and travel and travel for years and years in the light of that one beam when we might have had direct on us the blaze of the Moral Sun full-orbed. The Gospel is preached constructively instead of radiantly when men begin with some "Fragments of Science" and build up from these to Him who is "The Light of the World." You must begin with the Personality of Jesus Christ—bodied forth in perfect Deity and perfect Humanity—and move outward from Him who is the only Master in Nature,

in Philosophy, in Art, in Morality, in Religion. In Nature, since that is but his own Mind enstamped upon his works; in Philosophy, since he who is the Wisest can best instruct us in the love of True Wisdom; in Art, for He who "has well-arranged every thing beautiful in its appointed time" is in taste inimitably good; in Morality, for He who was man and knew what was in man can best define what is man's true bearing to man, in which True Morality consists; and in Religion, since He who is more than man can best define what is man's true bearing over against his God, in which consists True Religion. In all these things we have gotten at the exact truth when we have arrived at the mind of the Son of God. Even in doctrine the implicit rather than the constructive is radiant preaching. Outward must we always from the bodied-forth Personality of Jesus in order to understand Sin and Holiness, Sinai and Calvary, Reward and Punishment, Heaven and Hell. To me to study the "evidences" so called out of Jesus Christ is to become mad; but in Jesus Christ all is plain. Move we freely in Jesus Christ in all zones, downward and are enabled to rise again, upward and are enabled to descend again. He is the only "Ladder" of God on which are seen ascending and descending angels.

The Gospel has not that conspicuous prominence which it deserves when so called Christian men negative its claims by their conduct and cause the viciously ignorant and the educated irreligious to think slightly of them.

You are aware that the Gospel affirms the necessity of a Sabbath, are you not? that the declaration of the Lord Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath" lifts it on the high plane of elevated religious truth, and asserts the humanitarianism of the enactment which makes the Sabbath a day of physical rest and of spiritual improvement to man? You know that. The brutes need it. Man needs it much in his body but more in his soul and in his spirit. The street car men understand this, and each street car horse in New York on one or more of the city lines gets—or did get up to a recent time and I suppose yet does—his one day in seven to reach out his nose, and stretch out his legs, and shake his mane, and talk with his ears, and say how glad he is that he has a day in seven that he can rest. There is a dog out here on the Deerfield road—or was a few days ago—that knows when Sunday comes. This dumb prophecy spoken in the name of all brutes from the mouth of the ass and of the

horse and of the dog in their way finds in man that which responds "Amen" if we look clearly, closely, intelligently, radiantly. Man as an animal needs the bodily rest in which the Sabbath bathes him. From the stand-point of political economy he needs it, and this Thomas Babington Macaulay clearly voiced forth when he declared that England at the end of a given number of years—seven, say—would be wealthier far throughout all her industrial interests, by keeping Sabbath, than she could possibly be by tolerating Sabbath desecration. Man as a brain worker needs the Sabbath. As a worshiping creature, what the old Greeks defined to be "the creature that looks upward," he needs it. He needs it religiously in the sanctuary for his own sake and society's in a socially religious sense, for there only do "the rich and the poor meet together and the Lord is the Maker of them all." The Sabbath is then, in this light, seen to be not distinctively Jewish nor Christian but humanitarian, world-wide, universally man-needed. You can no more set aside its claims than you can blot out the sun in heaven or abolish God's Throne. It is apparent that this view of the Sabbath easily suggests the mind of God in the matter of the Sabbath. It is for man's good by divine appointment, and that not out of caprice or of severity but out of love, for man's sake and not God's sake.

This being the Gospel doctrine of the Sabbath, what is the keeping of it by too many so called Christians? Why, they keep the Sabbath as the brutes keep it. They see not the industrial aspects of it that Macaulay saw. They do not keep it as brain workers. They do not prize its socially religious aspect by keeping holy day—themselves and their children—in the courts of the Lord. They slight its religious aspect, and are ignorant of its delights and its benefits in this particular. They do worse. They ride for pleasure. They do works required neither by necessity nor by mercy. They open their shops and stores and encourage loafing, and coarse talk, and vulgar jests, and sometimes I am afraid they are tempted to sell wares. I have often thought that a druggist's temptations in this matter must be very strong, but if I were a druggist I would sit in my store with my door locked, and allow persons to ring the bell, whose calls I would answer, and whose business I would attend to, provided they came to have prescriptions filled strictly for medicinal purposes and for immediate use. Because a man is a druggist is no reason he should be cheated out of his Sabbath or so surrender his right in the matter that he is compelled to violate a plain command and to make himself guilty before God.

So called Christian men are not, on the Sabbath, to sell cigars, nor peanuts, nor confections, nor are they to do any thing whereby a brother—

an irreligious man—stumbles or is made weak. Of course to keep the Sabbath is not binding upon Christians alone, but upon all men. When I remember that it is commonly reported that so called Christian men do such things as those just mentioned, or like things, or things which I dare not name, I am humiliated beyond measure ; and I understand why it is that it is so easy for the boys to play ball on the village reservoir common ; why it is that so many lads and grown up men love the roof of the little building overshadowed by the honey-locust tree under the southern slope of the reservoir embankment as a Sabbath place to play cards ; why it is that Sunday driving is so much in demand that rates of vehicles on that day are nearly double the week-day rates—for so I was informed when compelled to get a conveyance one Sabbath not long since to go and preach the Gospel ; why it is so easy for many of the viciously ignorant and the educated irreligious to remain in continued absence from the Lord's House and in open rebellion against Him. In the name of Him whose I am, and whose Power and Presence is on me while I speak, I demand that all you who are guilty quit yourselves of this plague, and be clean.

In matters of business honesty how many so-called Christians there are whose practices give the Gospel any thing but its conspicuous importance in the minds of the irreligious with whom they have to do. An honest man it is said is the noblest work of God—a dutiful man that is, one who dares to do all which a conscience evangelically enlightened tells him he ought. In such a man's life True Morality or Duty to Man is indissolubly joined with True Piety or Duty toward God. In such a man's life there is no divorcement of these twain when he leaves the sanctuary for the market places of the world. There can not be. In the day or the hour of his petition for divorce in these matters he forfeits his honesty and is no longer God's noblest work. I am far from saying that all business failures, or failures to meet business engagements, arise through willful dishonesty. Beyond doubt some of them do. Others again arise through carelessness and inattention to business, through idleness, through failing health or other causes over which by short-sightedness, or incompetency, or through wicked alliances with dishonest men, or with men themselves also careless, inattentive, sick, short-sighted, incompetent and allied with the wicked ; and it sometimes happens that not through dishonesty but through inward impotency and outward might of circumstances and surroundings he who was lately a ruler in business matters and gave the law to other men in business

is stripped of his all and he is refused credit of the very men on whom he once took large risks and lost heavily. I believe such instances are rare, but occasionally they do occur. In any matter as many-sided as complex, and as panicky as business on a large scale none but Almighty God is competent to understand and pass judgment in every case. If however so called Christian men would practice industry ; study the law of equivalents in buying and selling ; pay tithes of their income for the furtherance of the Gospel ; refuse to take unlawful interest, quit speculating in stocks ; cease to help the ungodly and to love them that hate the Lord ; earn a livelihood by honest toil and live within their income and teach every member of their respective families—not hopelessly diseased nor idiotic—each so to do, the reproach which retards the progress of the Gospel would be materially lessened and the Lord Jesus would be less frequently wounded in the house of his friends.

In matters of intemperance, the Gospel condemns it in all forms. With that hydra-headed monster Alcoholic Intemperance we dare to go out—against it—only with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Do not misunderstand me. I owe allegiance to but three organizations on the face of the earth,—the Family, the State, the Church. Into the family I was born ; into the State I was adopted by reason of my birth as a citizen ; and I have duties as a citizen when the law of the State is the law of my God and when her requirements go not against the dictates of my evangelically enlightened conscience. The Church is visible and invisible. Into the Church of Jesus Christ the invisible which he hath purchased with his blood I was born again by the Holy Ghost through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ at the age of fifteen, and received the knowledge of the triple witness that I was a spiritual child of God—the witness of the promise, of fruits, of the direct witness of the Holy Ghost. The visible Church of Christ is made up of several branches. Of these I chose that known as the Methodist Episcopal Church when I was converted ; was educated in her schools at my father's expense and my own—paying my way : was licensed to preach and am now pastor of the Lebanon Charge, of the East Cincinnati District, of the Cincinnati Conference, of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. I have a family. What is law in that family for me and the other members of it? The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When can I make suggestions to other families? When they go contrary to

the Gospel. I am a citizen of the United States of America. What is law in it? The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. When am I allowed to speak out against the customs of my nation or to make suggestions to other nations? When they go contrary to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is law in my Church? The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What am I allowed to preach? The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When am I allowed to speak out against practices in my own Church or other Churches? When they go contrary to the Gospel.

What is the Gospel? It is the bodied forth Personality of Jesus Christ—very God and very man—who as the Light of the worlds throws light upon all subjects of duty or things whatsoever that ought to be done, whether it be in this speck that men call earth or in the universe which radiates out illimitably far every whither upward, downward, outward or sideward whether amid Beings or Things. Light upon all mysterious subjects such as God, man, angels, just men made perfect, devils. Beaming forth from his Personality there falls light on Sinai on Calvary on Sin on Holiness: on Reward and on Punishment: on Heaven and on Hell: light on Science, Art, Philosophy and upon all kindred and associated subjects in so far as these illustratively reveal the mind of God and show us what ought to be done, beams out from his Personality. The knowledge of the Glory of God is reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of the True Nature of things in matters of Duty.

The publication of this glorious message is the business of the minister of Jesus Christ. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." The radiant method is the true Gospel minister's method. From Jesus Christ he goes outward to Art, Science, Philosophy, Politics, government, Societies, and these are useful to the preacher as they furnish him with illustrations. The preacher sits with the ichthyologist. It is the man who has studied the Personality of Jesus side by side with the man who has studied order in the animal kingdom. The fish-man says to the duty-man "I see this fish was made so that it could kill its fellow." "Indeed" says the preacher, "you ought to know, that's your specialty and not mine." Says the fish-man "The Being that made that fish is not a good Being or he would have made it so it could subsist on something else besides a near relative." Says the duty-man "I see there is trouble there, but all things were made by Jesus Christ, and Mount Calvary teaches me that He is a Being of love." Suppose however that the preacher says "there is a mistake here, I am going to study fish and show that the ichthyologist is mistaken." Meantime he stops fishing for souls

and goes to the study of fishes' bones. He can not fathom that mystery. He does not go back to the pulpit. The two ichthyologists grow old together, and evening by evening all life long sit sad and silently, and they say each to the other, "The Heavenly Father is dead, and an inexorably Bad Power is in control, and he is grinding and grinding and grinding us to pieces." Suppose the preacher had said, "My brother, I have just as much trouble in that matter when I turn my face from the Lord Jesus as you have ; if I study those things out of Christ it would drive me mad ; I think the unseen Power that made all things revealed himself to us that we might not go mad and sit sad and silently and weep ; I remember that the secret things belong to God but the revealed unto his children ; look by faith to the unseen Power through Him who died broken-hearted for you."

What would be the result? The ichthyologist would accept the Lord Jesus by faith and receive the peace that passeth knowledge. He would identify himself with the preacher's Church. The two would age together close and closer in a life-long Christian friendship. When they saw difficulties they would not stumble, for their faith in Christ would save them. Ever to the minister there comes the message "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." Leave specialties to specialists. They do a good and noble work. We accept their facts when they find them, and we thank them for their earnest, patient, honest toil. It is not the minister's business to dispute these facts but to admit them even when they involve difficulty. It is the minister's business to come to the specialist and say honestly thus : "It is my faith in Jesus alone which saves me ; without the light that falls on me from Him I should as speedily and seriously and fatally stumble over facts which I find in the spiritual world, as would you over any in the so called natural." Specialists then would be encouraged to be none the less diligent in their business while at the same time they would trust in matters of Duty, in the Light which beams on them from Jesus Christ.

I look forward to the time when my baby boy will come into my library among my books and begin to ask me questions. He comes now, but it is only to displace my papers ; rummage in the lower part of the book case ; mark on the blackboard ; and play horse with my rocking chair. But he will outgrow this, and I hope that such a conversation as this, when he is a grown up lad, will take place between father and son : "Papa, what book is that?" Robinson Crusoe. "Can I read it?" Yes, if you do n't thereby

neglect more serious study. That book is a play-book, and has the same relation to hard study that a game of ball has to hard work. You may read that for the same reason that I read "John Gilpin" when I am tired—to divert you.

"What books are those, the red and the blue ones?" Lives of Francis Xavier and John Coleridge Patteson. "Were they Methodists?" No; one was a Roman Catholic missionary, a Jesuit, and the other a missionary Bishop in the Church of England. "Why do you read them?" They were men much like Jesus; they were, if I may use the expression, Jesusized to a large extent. The value of Biography to a minister is to show in what particulars men are, and are not, like our Lord Jesus Christ.

"What are those six books on the third shelf?" Bishop Colenso's work on "the Pentateuch and Book of Joshua." "What are they about?" About such things as seemed to him to be difficulties as he studied the first six books of the Bible. "Are they serious matters?" Some of them are. "Can you explain them away?" Some I might, others I can not. "Do you think him a good man?" As I read after him he seems to me to be a conscientious man in the main—a truth seeking man—though he is no doubt mistaken in many things, I love him for his courageous honesty. "Do you think he did right when he put those difficulties before the world?" I do. It eased him no doubt of a great load, and it caused other men to examine and write of these same things. A blind, unquestioning, and superstitious study of God in his Word, is as dishonoring to Him, as is a blind, unquestioning, and superstitious study of Him in his works. Keep your eyes mercilessly wide-open to facts, and thank any man, good or bad, who puts you in possession of them; but be sure they are facts. In this way many supposed difficulties will be found not to be so, and on real difficulties you must turn the light that beams from the Personality of Jesus Christ—very God and very man. The ablest Biblical criticism from the ablest Biblical critics of evangelically enlightened consciences can alone determine what is in the text of the Bible as error, and what is gloss; what is to be winnowed out and what is to be retained. Remember my most important words, my son; it is your father's faith that the Bible when it stands the test of the ablest Biblical criticism of the ablest Biblical critics of evangelically enlightened consciences from age to age, will remain much as it now is except in non-essential and comparatively unimportant particulars; but if ever there comes a time when Moses and the whole of the Old Testament goes from you, for a time, and all of the New Testament goes from you for a time, save the words and acts of the Lord Jesus through which his glorious Personality

is seen beaming out on you, you will still be safe if you keep close to Him, for "following Him you will not walk in darkness but have the Light of Life." So will you be kept from drifting out into wide and open sea. In Jesus we have man disclosed and God revealed ; He has two hands, in one oil of Mercy, in the other whip of small cords of Justice.

"Can I read such books?" The Bible is the Only Book, as Sir Walter Scott well said ; all others are but poor imitations of books. For the present I advise you to read that, when you are older and stronger than you now are, when your habits are formed, and your principles settled, and your character established, I advise you to turn all the side-light on the Bible you can, and to read fearlessly every book that you feel you ought to read.

"Can I go in bad company?" For the present keep out of it all you can, and when you are thrown into it look to the Light that falls from Jesus to help and keep you. When you are older and stronger than you now are, and your habits formed, principles settled, and character established, then if God bids you go in the interest of his Gospel keep not back ; withhold not yourself from saloons, gambling hells, and brothels, if he bid you go ; but be sure that you go in obedience to convictions of duty ; under the Power and Presence of the Holy Ghost, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary both unabridged in your breast. His breath is hot and the tears are in his eyes. Kneel, kneel, my son. His knees strike the floor and mine with them. I put my hands on his head and pray, "Father, I give my son to thy service as my parents gave me, take him, renew him, and use him for thy glory." Do you think if I do that way with him that Bishop Colenso or the latest researches in Biblical criticism by men of evangelically enlightened consciences—or consciences not so enlightened—will hurt him? In matters of Biblical criticism Jesus is the Light of the world in questions of serious difficulty.

Take another instance for illustration. I go home from my office in the church and am no sooner seated in my chair than the door-bell rings loudly, repeatedly. I answer the call at once. When I get there a little boy says, "Mrs. So-and-so wants you to come round there right quick." I put on coat and hat and go at once. When I get there I see a little form, dimples in the hands, and dimples in the cheeks, curls on the forehead, but the spirit is fled, and the form is cold. I say nothing and the woman says nothing. Presently with sobs and wringing her hands she cries out, "Mr. Irvin, Oh Mr. Irvin, why did, why did God take my only baby when I had

given him to his service, and hoped he would some day preach the Gospel?" My good woman, I don't know; I can not answer your question; it is too deep for me. Let us pray. I say, "O Lord, thine handmaiden is smitten and her heart sorrowful; while she knows thy severity which comes through inexorable Law, let her know also thy Love in Jesus Christ." In all our sorrows we are to be comforted by the light that falls on us from Jesus.

So I say I dare go out against Alcoholic Intemperance as I go out against doubt—only with the Gospel. In so far as there be those within our pales who are troubled with this plague, we will bear with, admonish, and if need be discipline them. It is matter of devout thankfulness to God that some who were under the curse of this monster are now by faith again sitting as we believe at the feet of Jesus clothed and in their right mind. I submit here, however, when we blame the brewer, and charge the saloonist with guilt, whether the so called Christian barley-grower who raises the grain and sells it to the dealer knowing it will come back to curse our young men in alcoholic drinks,—I say I submit is the so called Christian barley-grower guiltless in this matter? I think not.

I say again I am identified with but three organizations on the earth—the Family, the State, the Church. These for me while I am on the earth, and then the company of the blessed dead in the Lord when the Heavens be no more. I like to speak well of good things that I see outside of these, but I dare also, when I see my duty clear in the matter, to point out in any club, organization, or association—outside of the three with which I am identified—what I see at work which is contrary to the Gospel.

I wish that one by one, at the rate of ten per day, for the next twenty days, you would call on the Principal of the Normal School and bear him my Christian greeting as a brother beloved. Thank him for the courteous and not unkind manner in which he called attention—at General Exercises of his school a few mornings ago as I sat on the platform—to the fact that I am opposed to so called Popular Amusements of a certain class. But suggest to him—and let this part of the message be underscored with three lines indicating large capitals—that my opposition is not on the ground of "religious scruples" as he stated, but on the ground of Christian expediency. I use the word expediency in its literal acceptation, *ex*—out, and

pes—a foot, hence foot-fore-most, to advance, make progress. I oppose the dance, the circus, the horse race, the card and billiard table, the theater—meaning thereby Tragedy, Comedy, and Farce—not on the ground that they are alike bad, nor that in themselves they are necessarily bad, nor on the ground that they badden all who attend or take part in these, but on the ground that their patronage and support by so called Christian people tends to rob the Gospel of that conspicuous prominence which it demands. I would go there for one thing, and a bad man would go there for another thing, and the bad man would say “He came here for the same purpose I did.” If I were to take a single glass of grape wine once in a while to refresh me, another man would take ale to refresh him, and another man would take whisky to refresh him, and another man would take brandy to refresh him. The brandy man would get drunk, and in a bloody fray, perhaps kill a comrade, and be lodged in the county jail. While he is awaiting trial I go in to see him. I talk, read the Bible, and pray with him. After I go out he says, “Well, there is not so much difference between us. He drinks wine and I drank brandy. It’s not in me, it’s in the brandy; it’s all the fault of the cursed drink.” For this reason at a wedding in this town I refused wine and said, “No, I do not drink at all.” I did it on the ground of Christian expediency. So if I were to go to Cincinnati to hear Booth I might manage to get through once or twice without much hurt, especially if I went to get that artist’s conception of Brutus or Hamlet—and so did it as a matter of self-improvement. But all the actors are not Booths and all the characters are far from Brutuses. On one side of the building is a saloon and on the other is a gambling hell. I go but once, but that evening there is a young man there whom I am seeking to lead to Christ, and he is seriously inclined; there is with him a young lady, a member of my Church. They are out to hear Booth, and they say, “It’s all right, over there is our pastor.” They go again. They enjoy it. They go again, and this time it is Wednesday evening and the young lady is absent from prayer-meeting. By and by they choose something not so select as Hamlet, then a worse thing, then a nameless thing. Their passions are inflamed. It is the old story of shame. Now she has lost her hope in Christ, and he feels that Jesus will not have mercy on him. She dies in a brothel, and his brains are blown out in a gambling hell. Whose fault? I had no religious scruples. I did not intend to harm them. No, they were dear young people. But I forgot for a moment that it is my duty to give conspicuous importance to the Gospel by my example. My ability to save others consists largely in my power to guard my influence over them for good. This is Paul’s principle wherein

he says he will not do any thing whereby his brother is led to stumble or is made weak. So in another place, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more meat while the world stands." The brother here is an idolater, and the question is whether Paul will go to a feast in honor of their idol, or eat meat offered in sacrifice to their idol when the impression to be given out by his going will be that he is worshiping their idol. Paul says, No, I will not go, for that will give them the impression that my religion is no better than theirs, that I am a worshiper of their god. His ground was Christian expediency. That is mine. Hence I keep away from horse races. I do not attend private theatricals. I do not patronize the dance, nor play cards nor billiards, nor attend circuses nor theaters, nor do I aim to do any thing whereby my brother—religious or irreligious—will have cause to stumble or be made weak. I might suggest other reasons for opposing some of these—waste of time, disobedience to laws of decency and of health, the morally bad atmosphere in which they place us, their serious interference with religious duties, and their secularizing tendencies—but I do not stop to urge these points. I find a broad Christian principle on which Paul acted that would wipe every one of them out, and that ought to keep every so called Christian man from attending, patronizing, or imitating these things, and I call that Christian expediency; and I believe in it; and I advocate it; and I practice it; and I advise others to do as I do; and I do all this in order that Theoretical and Practical Christianity may walk broadly out, unlimping, on both feet. This in some cases instead of involving religious scruples, involves the practice of religious self-sacrifice,—things as widely separated as the zenith and the nadir.

When a couple of young ladies—nice girls—called at the parsonage door seeking the support of myself and wife toward an entertainment that is to be given this week under the auspices of "The Murphy Reform Club," in connection with which, as is commonly reported, there will be raffling and distribution of prizes on the principles of a lottery, what do you suppose the pastor and his wife said—she first and he afterward, the matter having been settled beforehand between them? Why, this: "There will be things in connection with that entertainment which we can not sanction. We can not sanction any thing involving questions of morality or of piety through any organization outside of the Church that we would refuse to sanction in the Church. We can do nothing for you." We acted on the ground of Christian

expediency, and we have no idea that the members of "The Reform Club" will think any the less of us as Christians.

I am told that at a certain so called pantomimic performance in Washington Hall, Lebanon, O., a few evenings ago, a reputable man—calling himself a Christian—appeared before a mixed audience of men and women, girls and boys, young and old, clad only in his night attire. I noticed in the signed call for that entertainment, as published in the village prints, the name of a member of this Church. If he knew when he gave his name what was to be the character of that entertainment, then he is guilty. If he did not know, it betrays inexcusable blundering and absence of religious attention. I notice further—"tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph"—that a member of my own Church, in good and regular standing, had, as is evidenced by the published programme for the evening, a part in that entertainment. Do these say I am hostile? My answer is:—"Am I therefore your enemy because I tell you the truth?" Do they plead ignorance? They can not hereafter. Do they say "We stoop down to raise others up"? Deceive not yourselves. No man is able to stoop down and raise others up except as he goes in the spirit and in the manner of Him who was more than man—with Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary both unabridged in his breast—with that love which is not without law. I thunder in the ears of all the words of Jehu the son of Hanani to Jehoshaphat—"Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?" Righteous service calls not for wicked alliances. As we are not, as a cloak, to choose "the livery of Heaven to serve the devil in," so neither are we, as an excuse, to choose the livery of Hell to serve the Lord in. Without doubt we are at the beginning of the end for better or for worse in this matter.

The Gospel has not that conspicuous importance which it demands when so-called Christian men falter or are faithless in supporting it.

Too many regard it as a matter of charity to pecuniarily support the Gospel. They do not distinguish the difference between dues and free-will offerings. They talk about giving to the Lord. The fact is they are called to pay a debt, which they owe. Free-will offerings are to be made after our debts are paid; in Gospel matters as in grocery matters. The question we want to ask is not what will you subscribe? nor what will you give? nor what is

your offering? but how much do you owe the Lord? But how much do you owe? Let Jesus beam on you and see. The light from Him as it fell on Old Testament times required a tenth and sometimes a third of their income, and as it fell on a poor widow in the Temple in New Testament times "she threw in all she had even her living.

In the amount of their contributions how is it? This may be illustrated by two stoutly built, heavily muscled, Irish washerwomen wringing a bed-spread, or a blanket, or an old-fashioned coverlet, almost dry. They are one at either end, and each has a tight grasp with both hands, and they wring and wring and get a few drops of water. So it is with too many so-called Christians. When both God and man have labored hard with them you get a very small contribution.

What about the manner of paying. They promise without previous forethought on the matter and they pay without system. Their obligation to God is met in a slovenly and careless and stubborn way, after other obligations are met, and other expenditures—needless, luxurious, and wicked some of them—provided for. It is vain to plead poverty except in rare cases. If you take the word poverty and strike out all after the letter p. and write, e-nu-ri-ous-ness, you will have it—penuriousness. Hereditary, premeditated, habitual penuriousness—ineradicable without more of the grace of God. I dare say this in a Church of fair liberality and where the finances are in passably good condition.

Look at the matter of attendance upon a preached Gospel and see what is the importance which many so-called Christians attach to it.

Some go very seldom. Sabbath to them is what it is to the brutes, a day of physical rest. Many go but occasionally. Others substitute class, or prayer meeting, or Sunday School for the preaching of the Word. To such an extent is this carried that in one place a Sunday School teacher occupied the preacher's study and read to a Sunday School class—a part of them members of that particular Church—while the pastor was in his pulpit. You need not think these matters pass unnoticed. Little three year old at the parsonage said last Sunday at dinner table, "Mamma, Brother So-and-So went home after class." A very serious matter it was to me a few weeks ago—the matter is improving now—to see so many of our younger Church members attending the evening prayer meeting and then going away from the Church without hearing the evening sermon. I have no control over those who are not members of any Church, nor over those who are mem-

bers of other Churches, but I have often felt like meeting those who are members of my own Church, and saying now if you can't come to the preaching your best plan is to absent yourself from the service that precedes it; or I have felt sometimes like doing what Cromwell did of a certain Parliament when he appeared on its floor and dissolved it. I have felt like saying "out here, you who sing and pray and make loud profession and then turn away to give the irreligious world the impression that the Gospel is of little value." But you say "we can't attend all the services." Attend the preaching and neglect some of the others. "But I am needed there." But you are needed here. If you can't do all the other work you now have lay down part of it and see if some one else won't take it up. Did I do that way? Not always. When I was in college, a part of the time, I attended Sunday School at Nine, Sermon by my pastor at Eleven; a Church class at Two; the University Lecture or Sermon at Three; and Young People's Prayer Meeting in the Evening, and by that time I felt tired, and said "Well I won't go to Church this evening." What I ought to have done would have been to have given up one or more of the other services and taken in its place evening preaching. We were required however by the rule of the University to attend Sunday Afternoon Lecture. I think you see it now, but if you don't you ought to have Dean Swift's man after you. Who's that? The Dean says, somewhere in his writings, that in a certain place he came across a people who never did any thinking except as a man drew near with a long stick on the end of which was a blown up bladder, dried and in which there were beans. As the stick was shaken, the beans rattled, and that woke the man up and set him to thinking. I am glad that so many of you attend both services regularly, and that the members of the choir are nearly always in their places.

The importance of the Gospel is disregarded in the way it is too often received. One in overweening self-importance regards the whole sermon as intended for him: another's eyes look round and say "those whom the pastor is shooting at are not here to-day." The preacher may be tired, or sick, or the Lord may not have favored him with a special message—for our custom does not like that of the Quakers relieve a preacher from speaking if the Spirit does not move Him—then somebody speaks slightly of the Sermon before they are out of the Church, and parents go home and talk slightly about it to their children. In revival times many get feverish and restless and want any thing but what they have, and frequently what they much need is more religion. Outside help is good sometimes but it is best not to count on it. Any man in these times who takes pastoral over-

sight of a Church assumes a vast responsibility, and whether a whole mill-stone of unnecessary burdens, three quarters, a half, or one fourth is hung about his neck depends much on the way his own Church people receive and sustain him. I dare say this among a people who in the main have sustained me well.

The Gospel is robbed of its importance when we forget that it is designed to save every one that believeth. All nationalities—the toiling populations as well as the educated and more well-to-do. Gamblers, prostitutes, liars, and thieves may all receive the Gospel if by faith they will accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

When we are dissatisfied with it and are disposed to murmur, complain, and feel like substituting something else in its place. I am glad in these times when so many are restless and feverish and excited, that my childhood faith sustains me and I can cry out;—The Gospel, The Gospel only,—for me, and for all—is the power of God unto salvation.

Do you ask me why I speak thus? I answer, As a Church we are at spiritual high tide, and now is a good time to beach some of these utterances where they can be seen and felt when the tide has rolled out again. I learned something at the sea-shore last Summer. At low tide the people go in to bathe, and go down on the sands to laugh and chat and pick up shells and make merry. At high tide they fall back high up on the beach, and as I may sit and worship; then if the ocean has any leaf from a far off sunny shore, or a piece of sea-weed from the ocean depths, or a shattered mast from a wrecked vessel, on about each fifth recurring wave at high tide, it is given to them. At low tide no attention would be paid, but at high tide they are ready to take ocean gifts, and look at them, and think about them, and thank the ocean for them.

The whole occasion is ripe for it. When Mr. Sumner was sent to the Senate to head the abolition movement, he was slow to speak; his constituency held an indignation meeting at which Theodore Parker rose and said:—he confessed to being disappointed; he thought it would be all right yet; they must remember that “a fool’s bolt is soon shot.” Sometimes religious teachers as secular are blamed for not speaking when if the truth were known the occasion is not ripe for it.

The irreligious world demands it of me. I feel their attitude to be this: “Show us a man who will not shrive his soul to please us, nor his Church,

nor any one, and if we need help in spiritual matters we are not afraid that he will shrive his soul if we put our case in his hands."

I am standing but a mile from where one of America's most gifted men was born, and am preaching this morning in a pulpit in the town where he passed most of his life. I remember that to his eyes the heavens lighted up when Moscow burned disclosed the face of a Just God. I remember his faith that wrong shall die in answer to prayer, as he crystallized it in this glowing utterance—"The weakest hand in Mexico uplifted in prayer to the God of Battles will call down upon you a Power in the presence of which the iron hearts of your warriors shall be turned into ashes." That utterance thrills me to-day as it did when a boy I declaimed it in a country school. Though I never saw Thomas Corwin, I am reliably informed that he canvassed this very town in the interest of God's Word when as a man he had a reputation national, and I feel to-day that could he speak he would say—"Preach; preach the Gospel earnestly, or you will make infidels."

I am but three squares from where a most cultured barrister and highly gifted orator in the interest of human life drew a pistol and by accident fired the shot which sent him into the Unseen. I say nothing of his politics, and I know not his religious life, but I know he had a Lecture on the Bible, and I feel could he speak he would say, "Publish the Glad Tidings of Him on whose two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The faces of two old people are on me as they sit in their quiet rural home. My mother was a soldier's daughter, orphaned of her mother at an early age, and from young girlhood until she was on the upward side of thirty, her life was passed in the homes of the people, learning little of books but much of men. My father was a cooper's son—whose adze dropped from his dying hand when my sire was yet a lad—whose hands tightened on the handles of the plow which a drinking field-hand had left, his sister meantime riding the lead horse as he guided the plow. For seventeen years he run his flour-mill night and day—Sundays only excepted. When he was on the upward side of thirty my mother became his wife. God gave them eight children, five of whom yet remain with them, and three are not. They taught us implicitly and radiantly to believe in God, in the Bible, in the Savior, in reward and in punishment, in the lost condition of the finally impenitent and sinning, in the resurrection of the body and in the future glory of the blessed dead in the Lord. Their children such as remain—and those who are gone passed away in infancy—all profess faith in Christ, and I pray God may never backslide. The eyes of these two, at the age of sixty-seven, are on me, and did I speak other than I speak to-day, the chrism of love—

which fell from lip and eye and brow and uttering breathing prayer to God as they gave me to his service—would fall from me.

Other faces are on me to-day. When little three year old at the parsonage was six months younger than he now is, as the physician turned away, he said—"Mamma, where is Mrs. Dr. Sellers?" The mother without hesitancy said, "She is in Heaven." Had the child known he might have asked, "Where are sisters Stanford and Weakley, the two Marches, father and son, father Burroughs, William Monfort, with others of the two generations of Methodists that have lived and worshiped in this church and are gone?" The faces of these are on me while I speak, and did I speak other than I speak to-day they would ring their curses on my head out of the upper air.

The eyes of the martyred dead are on me, those of Paul, and Huss, and Patteson, and others who have sealed their testimony with their blood and given their life for the world through the faith as it is in Jesus, and did I hold my peace their voices would cry out against me.

Does any one suggest these utterances will injure my reputation, my answer is: I have none to gain or lose; my business is not with my reputation, but to get and maintain character, to preach Christ, to warn and instruct every one that I may present you perfect in Christ Jesus.

Brethren, a great load is taken off of my heart and a great responsibility is laid on you. If you fail to appreciate the importance of the Gospel, your blood be on your own heads. If you so act that others fail to appreciate it, blame not me. If through the abounding mercy of God in Christ I get to the future home of the saints, and any of you are shut out, I will hide my face in sadness and rain my tears after you as you go down your dark and sorrowful way.

I close these weighty and serious words by an extract from a Pastoral Address sent out to each of you in November, 1875, when my face was yet new among you: "Though I should be accounted neither learned, brilliant, nor eloquent, yet no man shall charge me with unfaithfulness while I remain among you. I desire nothing so much, in your behalf, as your personal salvation."

EXPLANATORY.

I PUBLISH this for my protection and for your defense and lasting benefit. This form was not thought of on the morning of the 29th of January, when these as yet unsyllabled utterances began to toss me as a skiff is rocked in the wake of an ocean ship. Three days later this form was resolved on, and on Monday, February 4th, following, the copy was nearly all ready for the printer.

To many this will be a surprise—to none more than to my aged parents. As they bore with my ways in childhood, so I beg their indulgence in my early manhood.

These utterances were born out of a high spiritual atmosphere. When I drop down to a lower plane I shall be slow to modify any of them, as it is fundamental with me that a man's life should be the supreme out-following of his best moods.

This document is copyrighted and published at my own expense. A limited number of copies are printed. It is not sold to any one. Save a few copies, it is only for my Church-members and probationers. No copy is come by honestly unless it bears the owner's name—or names—on the fly-leaf, together with my own name—all written with my own hand.

I beg your prayers. I am yours courageously in the service of the Gospel.

J. N. IRVIN.

LEBANON, O., *Monday, Feb. 4, 1878.*

PAUL AT ATHENS—THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT.

SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE CINCINNATI CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 10, 1877.

TEXT. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."—*Acts XVII*, 16.

I KNOW that you are all in sympathy with me. The religiously indifferent and the irreligiously critical are not here.

There is always the *spoken* and the *suggested* sermon—the one falling from the preacher's lips, the other awakened in the minds and hearts of the hearers by the operation of the Holy Spirit of God.

I have chosen my text from the life of one—the "first Christian Missionary" as he is sometimes called—the mention of whose name is a suggested sermon, an unwritten biography, a lasting benediction; and I doubt not that the operation of the Spirit of God upon the minds of fifty or a hundred or more of his called servants, who are accustomed to handle the Word of God as the ministers of Jesus Christ, can produce fifty or a hundred or more suggested sermons better than any words of mine. If we ask "what it was that shook this man whom sometimes we have seen immovable as the rock upon which Jerusalem rested," I answer,

The Missionary Spirit.

The measure of interest in the missionary cause—the interest not from the God-ward but from the man-ward side—is the measure of it that exists in living men.

I. In Paul at Athens we behold *The Missionary Spirit Aroused*. It was not the interest of the sight-seer or of the pleasure-seeker which by pleasingly varied repetition is whipped into a foam. It was not fear of mortal man that shook Paul. There was more of this subsequently at Corinth when a double fear possessed him—the fear that he should lose his life and that the cause of God would not succeed, and to comfort him it was said of the Lord by night in a vision, "Fear not, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I have much people in this city, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee."

He is not whining over his hard lot as an itinerant ; his journeyings, his stonings as at Lystra, or scourgings as at Philippi ; nay, rather in these things he glories, since they fill up the measure of Christ's sufferings, which were left over of the Master that they might be shared by his servants.

Special divine interference was not necessary to awaken Paul's interest on this occasion. Special divine interference overtook Balaam for vengeance in the narrow pass where God took him under arrest. It was a case of special divine interference when Saul was knocked from his horse near Damascus ; when the blow of the angel's hand fell upon Peter's side for *deliverance* in the prison ; and when a blow from the same angel's hand fell with a double-purposed stroke upon Herod—a signal to the worms that Herod's body was ready for them, and a rebuke to the would-be-worshippers of man. If mere sight-seeing of a low order, if fear of man, if divine interference did not arouse Paul's interest on this occasion, then what did ?

1. He was not unmoved by the genuine art—the evidences of it—everywhere about him. There were paintings and statues and arches and temples, and Paul had no mean interest in these things. His experience we can well believe to have been that of Henry Martyn, who says of himself, "Since I have known God in a saving manner, poetry, painting, and music have a charm unknown to me before, for I think that religion has refined and improved my taste and made it susceptible of impressions from the sublime and beautiful." How different this experience from that of some who because servants of God feel called to be despisers of genuine art. But Paul's æsthetic taste did not run away with him. How easy to have been satisfied with mere sight-seeing, with interested strolling from street to street, a student of the fine arts. There were a great many taking things in Athens of which but one example, a picture, in the Painted Porch. The Persians are defeated and taking to their ships. The little band of Greeks are cheered on in pursuit of the turbaned host of Datis and Artaphernes. Cynegirus with both hands lays hold of a boat to keep the Persians from launching it. A Persian cimeter's stroke chops off his hands, and as they fall into the vessel he gripes the side of the boat with his teeth. Paul, though interested in these things, was not led away by them.

2. He was moved, no doubt, in treading the haunts of great men. Athens was not only queen of the arts, but mother of great men—orators, philosophers, poets, historians, statesmen. The deeds and virtues of her sons she had memorialized in objects which met the Apostle's gaze. The memory of Aristotle and Plato and Socrates, of Conon and Cimon and Alcibiades, of Æschines and Demosthenes, were no doubt present to his

mind. In his own veins there flowed semi-Grecian blood. His own capacious mind was well stored with the choicest of Grecian literature. Think you there failed him the quickened blood-pulse, and the tremor which comes with mental white-heat? I think not. The fact that he quoted from three Greek poets in his speech evidences his wise use of literary material, and shows him ready "to gather flowers on heathen and on Christian soil."

3. To the warrantably inferred æsthetical, philosophical, and patriotic interest which Paul felt in Athens the text adds the deep-stirrings that his religious nature suffered when he saw the city "wholly given to idolatry"—full of idols. There is the high heaven of art, and above it the higher heaven of philosophy, and above it the highest heaven of the pious servant of God. It is well for a man to look into the third heaven. It may be well with a man in art, and well with him in philosophy so called, and excellently well with in logical acumen, in force of words, in rhetorical power,—and so it was in Athens. There may be many images but no Deity—and so it was in Athens. If a man's God be the creature of his hand or of his brain he can at best have transferred "his own imperfect attributes to his god"—as Cicero well says—and it can never exalt him—and so it was in Athens. A man's face can never be transfigured from looking at his own photograph—and so it was in Athens. There may be absence of religious indifference and absence also of highest religious interest—and so in Athens. So that Paul standing—when his time came to speak—with the uncanopied heaven above him, and in sight of the illimitable sea, and in the presence of the teemingly cherishing and fruitful earth, lifted his eyes above the high heaven of Art and the higher heaven of philosophy, waved his Christian orator's arm at which the thirty thousand gods of Athens vanished into thin air, and pointed to the third highest heaven of religion, where in full view of the up-turned faces of his anxious listeners, he in chosen words with a few well-timed touches, portrayed the Countenance of One whom it were well for Athens and the whole world to worship—DEITY; God the Creator of all things; God the Preserver and Ruler of all things; God the Judge of all men. If we inquire whence his religious interest, I reply, In the perilously necessitous condition of idolatrous Athens, and by the absolutely monarchical power of the truth by which, for the time being, he was put in trust of Almighty God.

II. *The Missionary Spirit Conserved.* But the missionary spirit was not only aroused in Paul, it attained stability and permanence and became residual.

1. This because he was a *religionist*. Others might stand outside the gates of Art, Science, and Philosophy—which often are bolted from within—and cry “Hear, O Art, O Science, O Philosophy, let the religion of Jesus in,” as for himself he would storm the gates of conscience and take the citadel of the heart for Christ. And he knew that with Christ in the heart the inward fastened gates would in due time have their bolts turned back and themselves thrown open that through them the issues of true religion might flow into all the domains of Art and of Science and of Philosophy. He understood the relation of True Religion to these studies. Of the child Jesus it was said, “This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.” There shall be seen multitudes climbing upon this Rock for a way of escape, as the shipwrecked mariner welcomes the rock that lifts its head above the waves. Others shall use advantages of Christian civilization, as some seek the elevation of a precipice that they may dash themselves in pieces. ‘This the practical side of that declaration. Conceive of this Rock—Jesus Christ—as the Great Boulder of Almighty God rolling down through the world. A turn down one side and up the other of the halls of Art, and all that is false in art is crushed out, and all that is true is retained. Another turn through the hall where are met the gods of ancient and of modern times. Down go those images, and all that is false in pagan and idolatrous systems, in comparative religions and mythologies, is crushed out of those images—the representatives of their respective systems—and all that is true is retained. The introduction of Jesus has the same happy results in philosophy. The false is eliminated, the true is retained. When Jesus has thoroughly sifted the opinions of the philosophers—having subjected them to his moral winnowings—then Bacon and Plato and Socrates will, in the name of all true philosophy of whatever age, put the crown of philosophy upon the brow of Jesus. Paul believed this and so taught. He gave himself wholly to his work with single eye; and I am glad that he did, else it would have been said “men of Athenian build, who are seeking the newest fashions in philosophy, are not fit subjects for the Gospel, and we will pass them by.” Paul knew that of the greatest sinners in art or science or philosophy it might yet be said as of Job, “He hath taken them by the back of the neck and shaken them in pieces.”

2. He was a *gentlemanly* religionist. He drank in this quality with his mother’s milk and imbibed it at the feet of Gamaliel. This preserved him from coarseness at all times and filled him with inimitable courtesy. It enabled him to say “Most noble Festus” and “ye men of Athens.” It taught him that the power of gentleness is irresistible. It gave him courage. He

braved changing climates and tempestuous seas, and stood unmoved whether amid the shower of stones from the mob at Lystra or under the blows of the lictor's scourge at Philippi. It gave him sympathy. He could say I am ready not to impart the Gospel of God only but if need be my own life. When the trifling runaway slave of Philemon—Onesimus—came to Rome, Paul though a prisoner heard him and assumed his obligations, and then drawing up a bond by which he agreed to satisfy his master, as the weight of his weighty life gathered at the point of his pen he wrote "I Paul have written it with mine own hand." Then signed his name and sent the document to Philemon.

3. He was a *gentlemanly religionist born of the Holy Ghost*. He declares himself separated from his mother's womb, called by God's grace, and with God's Son revealed in him that he might preach the Gospel. By the call of the Church whose elders laid their hands on him; by the injunction of the Holy Ghost "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have called them;" and by words from the lips of the risen Jesus, "depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" he came and gave himself wholly to this work. Laying his offering at the feet of Jesus in whom he recognized a Master, he yielded himself pliantly into his hands to be fashioned as it pleased him, and was ready to coin the blood of his body and the sweat of his brow, for the advancement of the Gospel.

4. He had *not only the spirit but the habit* of a gentlemanly religionist born of the Holy Ghost. Habit makes the astronomer look not only at starry worlds but points his telescope into vacant space. Habit made the old dying stage driver feel with his foot for the brake on the down grade. To Paul's Pauline spirit add his Pauline habit, and you have another secret of his continued itinerating, his watchfulness for work, his quick entrance of every providential door standing ajar. The marks of the Philipian stocks might be upon his ankles, the marks of the stones of Lystra or of the Philipian lictor's scourge might be upon his back, it mattered not; the force of the religionist's habit caught up his suffering body as in a vise and held it erect, while his feet trod the path of missions and his lips knew no message but that of salvation. The spirit and the habit of this man conserved the missionary interest which the condition of Athens and the dominant power of the truth had aroused in him.

III. *The Missionary Spirit Actualized*. The Missionary Spirit must not only be aroused and conserved, it must be actualized. So it was in Paul's case.

He did not wait until the arrival of Silas and Timothy as he at first proposed to do. There must be the supreme outfollowing of our best moods. There are moods good and better, and the best and it is safe for a man to follow only his best moods; and the reason why the best mood with too many does not continue is because there is no supreme outfollowing of it. The supreme outfollowing of our best moods in actualizing the missionary spirit will necessitate:

1. The abandonment, in theory and practice, of the idea that the missionary movement is a "modern" movement—an experiment. It is old. As old as the cross which pre-existed from before the foundation of the world in the heart of Almighty God. As old by foreshadowings as the sufferings of Abel and Abraham. As old by actualization as the sufferings of Jesus on Mount Calvary, and destined to endure while a vestige of that manhood remains which Jesus came to set in order.

2. The supreme outfollowing of our best mood in this matter will break down all race prejudices. The Gospel is to pass current wherever man worships an idol or is in need of A God.

3. It will do away with "the Home" and "the Foreign" idea of Missions, in fact and in form. Just as the Law and the Gospel are parts of the same whole and are woven together into one garment of Salvation for the covering of the moral nakedness of the world, so the home work is a part of the foreign and the foreign a part of the home, and the two woven together are one. In fact this is true and there is approach to it in form. There is an advance in the matters of salary so that the claims for living of chief pastors and regular are laid direct before the people, and if there is shrinkage there is a pro rata loss. To pastors' support some official bodies add current expenses and make one appeal to the people, and in the hands of wise and converted stewards and trustees there is no danger. We want to go a little further and regard the beams of the sanctuary, and the oil for the lights, and the livings of the priests, and our offerings for the Gentiles as all included under the head of missions—the people's offering. God speed that day. I hope to see it. When it dawns let all the people together with the Sons of Aaron cast in their tithes. A little while ago there ran through the country the cry "Not sectional but national interests. Let there be no south, no north, no east, no west, but let the country be one from ocean to ocean and from the Lakes to the Gulf." Let the cry go up in the interest of Missions, "there is no home work and no Foreign work but all is one in Christ." There is a wave of enthusiasm—which has its origin about the throne of God as rivers their source about the snowcapped mountain's

brow—which shall descend upon, and break and distribute itself throughout the whole Church and so shall give added interest and success to the work of the Gospel. On a wave of that same enthusiasm, in the genuine missionary spirit, Jesus came out to us from the throne of God.

4. Above all we must needs keep high ideals before the Church, the lives of those who have done and suffered most in this work.

There was a scene near the seven-hilled-city when the first century had rounded near two thirds to its full which it were well to keep before the Church. Within the Ostian gate a centurion in charge of prætorian guards—under their keep an aged man; in the crowd a group of envious priests—the rabble who hoot and whoop and yell—about the beloved physician a knot of Disciples whom thus far “the sword and the cross and the shirt of fire” have failed to terrify. Outward for one mile and a half they pass the costly tombs of the dead and the palatial residences of the living: a turn three-quarters of a mile to the left, and by a hurried march they pass through a by-lane and stand in a hollow amphitheatrically shaped with the crowd looking on from the three hilly sides of the amphitheater to witness the bloody spectacle. The aged man’s head is laid upon the block. The executioner’s axe is raised and at a given signal quickly falls; the head drops,—a confirmation of the fact that Paul sealed his testimony with his blood and gave his life for the world. I know not how it is with you, my brethren—you may not be so quick to cool, and grow indifferent so soon, and be so speedily out of your best moods as am I—but as for me I must needs often say “O God, lead me outside the Ostian gate and let me see the place where Paul sealed his testimony with his blood and gave his life for the world.”

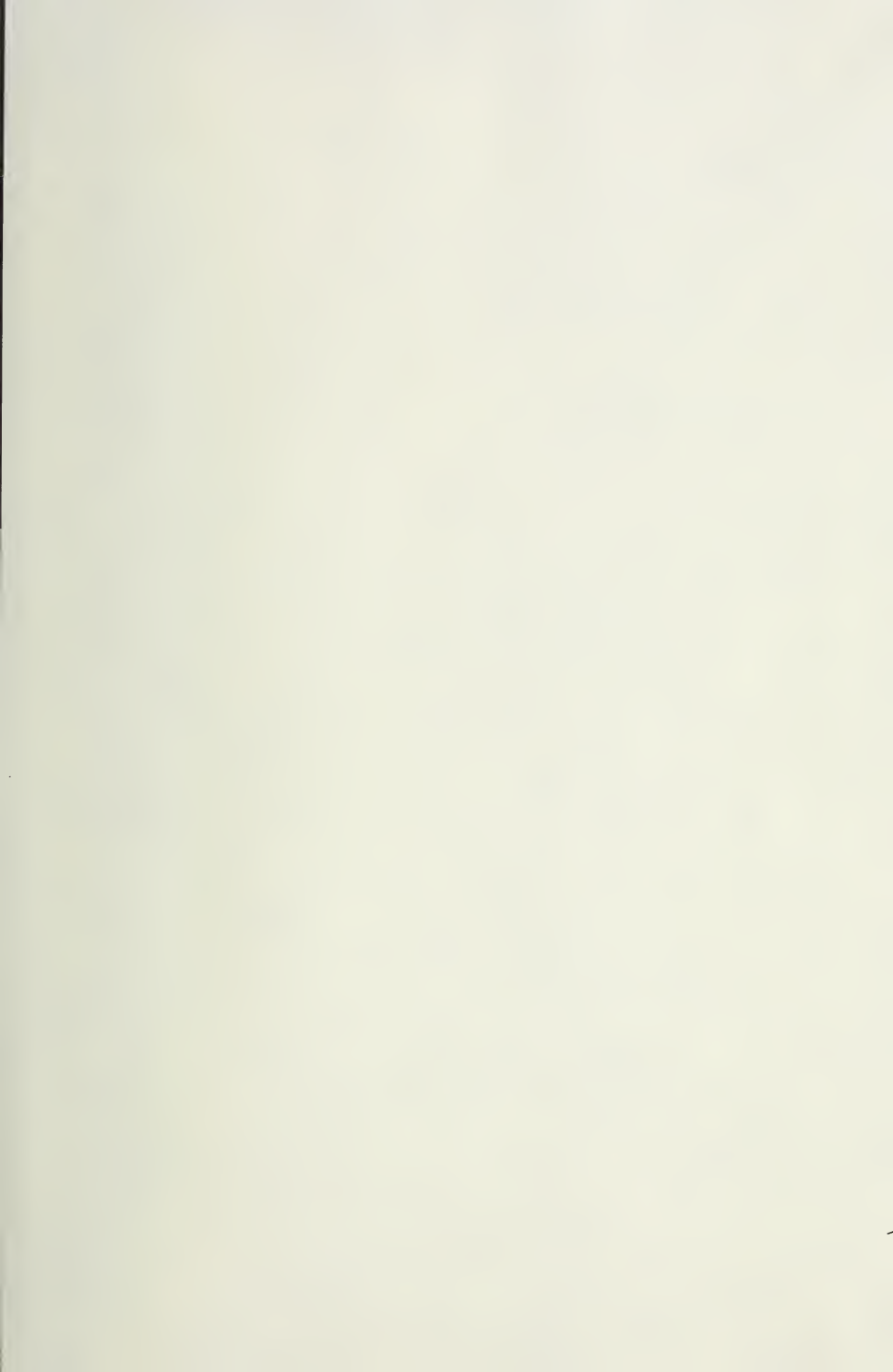
Look at that man Francis Xavier pupil and companion of Ignatius Loyola, who when about to embark to evangelize India—in a day when there was no Suez Canal but the voyage was made around the southernmost point of Africa in leaky vessels and it was custom for the voyager to take a winding sheet among his effects—as that man Xavier thought of the trials and hardships that were in store for him he was heard crying to God at dead of night “More, More, More” and on being asked “more what?” made reply “More trials and hardships than are in store for me.” When he had preached the Gospel in India he went in a Portuguese vessel to San Chan one hundred and twenty miles from Canton. Foreign vessels were not allowed to enter Chinese ports. This man Xavier was ready to give a man three hundred and fifty pieces of gold to take him in a small craft and put him down in Canton that he might preach the Gospel to these peoples. The

man who agreed to take him never came. The Portuguese vessel sailed away out of sight. Xavier died, in a wretched cabin, saying "O God, I have hoped in thee, in eternity I shall never be confounded." Often when I think of this man—who though a Roman Catholic, and a Jesuit, was nevertheless the servant of God and beyond question is now among the blessed dead in the Lord—I, protestant as I am, am appalled at my indifference on this subject and must needs say "O God, show me the wretched cabin where Francis Xavier died a witness for the truth and gave his life for the world"

A little while ago—1871—there died a man of noble English blood on an island in the Southern Pacific. He was young, manly, by natural and acquired abilities highly endowed, but following the lead of duty he gave himself to the evangelization of the Melanesian islands. The record of his life is such that scarcely twenty pages can be read anywhere without filling the eyes with tears. He visited seventy three of these islands adopting the children of these natives, washing, clothing, feeding, teaching them. But he sails no more in his ship "The Southern Cross" in those waters. He landed one day on an island and came not back. His pupils went in search. Canoes put out from the island where he was last seen bearing something rolled up in a mat. They took it, unrolled it. There was a naked body, with five wounds, a palm leaf on the breast,—a confirmation of the fact that John Coleridge Patteson sealed his testimony with his blood and gave his life for the world.

The eye of the church must be kept upon the glorious company of martyrs. The church must do what Paul and Xavier and John Coleridge Patteson did—actualize her best mood.

This will wipe out her debt. This will give her men and money to the full. This will tear off the leprous cloth from the wounds of the world, and spread the garment of salvation upon the moral nakedness of all peoples.





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